

YEAR END REVIEW: MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS 2018: THE HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION YEAR

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Infrastructure: Roads

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways

Year end Review: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways 2018: the Highway Construction Year

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HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES

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INTRODUCTION

1. The year 2018-19 was declared by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways as the **YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION**. This was a year for consolidating the gains that have accrued from major policy decisions taken in the previous four years, a time for monitoring of ongoing projects, tackling road blocks and adding to the already impressive pace of work achieved last year. The Ministry took a decision to complete all ongoing projects that had been awarded upto 2015-16, and placed the highest ever target of constructing at least 12,000 kms of national highways as against 9829 kms achieved during 2017-18, and make special efforts to take this length to 16000 km. Overall, more than about 61,300 km length of road projects, costing more than Rs. 6.48 lakh crore, are in progress at present. The balance ongoing works (which have been awarded, appointed dates declared and works going on at sites) are more than 30,200 kms during the year. In the first nine months of FY 2018-19, 5,759 km has been completed in 18-19 against 4,942 km up to same period in last year.

1.2 In order to achieve this target the Ministry brought in policies, guidelines and

practices for expediting pre-construction activities and bringing in more efficiency and transparency in the process. The Bidder Information Management System (BIMS) was developed to streamline the process of pre-qualification of bidders for contracts on EPC Mode. BhoomiRashi portal is being used extensively for expediting the process of notification for land acquisition. The portal BIMS and BhoomiRashi portals have further been linked with Public Financial Management System (PFMS) to facilitate real time payment to beneficiaries.

1.3 On the finance front too, National Highways Authority of India did a successful financial closure of its first project under Toll- Operate –Transfer this year and offered 586 km of national highways under the second bundle. The first TOT bundle of 9 projects, totaling approximately 681 KM of roads in two states of Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, was awarded earlier during the year for Rs. 9,681 Crore, which was 1.5 times the Authority's estimate. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) also got an unsecured loan of Rs 25,000 crore from State Bank of India for 10 years with 3 years of moratorium on repayments. This is the largest amount of loan to have been sanctioned to NHAI in one stroke by any institution. This is also the largest long term unsecured loan sanctioned by SBI at a time to any entity.

1. The year has also seen a lot of movement in the transport sector, with focus on reducing carbon footprint while enhancing road safety, efficiency and convenience of road users. An MoU signed with 'Transport for London' (TFL) to revamp the public transport system in the country, building mini wayside amenities at toll plazas, establishing a quality – based ranking system for toll plazas, simplification of Driving License application, notifying emission standards for construction equipment vehicles and tractors, issue of guidelines to set up well equipped and competent Driving Training Centres (DTC) at district levels and for granting financial assistance to NGOs for undertaking road safety advocacy, launch of SukhadYatra App and Toll Free Emergency Number, the decision to allow free passage to user in case of malfunctioning of Electronic Toll Collection infrastructure, compensation of Rs. 5,00,000/- to road accident victims, notification regarding blending of gasoline with methanol in order to reduce vehicle exhaust emissions and import burden and linking of vehicle emission data with State/Central Register of Vehicles are all notable initiatives taken by the Ministry in this direction.

2. CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL HIGHWAYS Award / Construction Statistics:

A two days long exercise was conducted to review of over 700 ongoing National Highway projects in the country, and over 300 projects were identified to be completed by 2019 achieving the highest ever construction in financial year 2018-19.

The table below details the trends of NH construction over the years.

Year	Award (kms)	Construction (kms)
2014-15	7972	4410
2015-16	10098	6061
2016-17	15948	8231
2017-18	17055	9829

Note: In FY 2018-19, 5,759 km of Highways have been constructed till 30.11.18 as against 4,942 kms during the corresponding period last year. The Ministry's focus is to ensure that pre-construction activities are substantially completed before award of projects.

. Progress of Major Programmes/ Landmark Projects:

i. BharatmalaPariyojana: Phase-I

This is the umbrella program for the highways sector unrolled in 2017-18, that aims to optimize the efficiency of road traffic movement across the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps. 34,800 km of National Highways are to be constructed under the Phase-I of the programme between 2017-18 to 2021-22 in a phased manner at a cost of Rs. 5,35,000 crore. This includes 5,000 kms of the National Corridors, 9000 kms of Economic Corridors, 6000 km of Feeder Corridors and Inter-Corridors, 2000 kms of Border Roads, 2,000 kms of Coastal Roads and Port Connectivity Roads and 800 kms of Green-field Expressways.

Projects for 6,407 km road length have been awarded under the BharatmalaPariyojana(including residual NHDP) till the end of October this year. DPRs are being prepared for projects for the balance length. De- congestion projects have been completed for 13 out of 191 congestion points identified, and are under progress for de-congestion of 80 other points. In addition, DPRs are being prepared for 93 congestion points. Out of the 35 locations identified for Multimodal Logistics Parks, DPRs have been initiated for 7 locations and availability of land parcels is being confirmed with State Governments for the rest of the locations.

ii. SetuBharatam

In order to ensure safe and smooth flow of traffic, Ministry has envisaged a plan for replacement of Level Crossings on National Highways by ROBs/ RUBs under a scheme known as SetuBharatam. Under this programme, out of 174 ROBs/RUBs which are to be constructed, 91 have been sanctioned with an estimated cost of Rs.7,104.72 crore. Out of 91 sanctioned, 59 ROBs/RUBs have been awarded which are in various stages of progress.

iii. ChardhamMahamargVikasPariyojna

The project envisages development of easy access to the four prominent Dhams, namely, Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedranath and Badrinath, situated in the state of Uttarakhand. These four Dhams are prominent pilgrimage centres. The project entails development of 889 km of roads with configuration of two-lane with paved shoulders at an estimated cost of about Rs. 12,000 crore. The projects are being taken up on EPC mode and the programme is targeted for completion by March, 2020.

iv. Eastern Peripheral Expressway– Western Peripheral Expressway

The two projects of Peripheral Expressways around Delhi, comprising 135 km Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE), and 135 km Western Peripheral Expressway (WPE) connecting NH-1 and NH-2 from Western and Eastern side of Delhi was completed this year and inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister in May 2018 and November 2018 respectively. The EPE was constructed by NHAI and WPE by Haryana Government. The two expressways were envisaged with the twin objectives of decongesting and de-polluting the national capital by diverting the traffic not destined for Delhi.

The EPE stretches from Kundli on NH 1 to Palwal on NH 2, and was constructed at a cost of Rs. 4617.87 crore, in addition to Rs. 5900 crore were spent on acquiring 1700 acres of land. It was completed in a record time of about 500 days against the scheduled target of 910 days. It is a fully access-controlled six-lane expressway with a closed tolling system. The expressway has an iconic toll plaza equipped with

electronic toll collection infrastructure, ITS control system of the entire EPE and a digital art gallery, with holographic models of major structures and making of the EPE. Weigh-in-Motion equipment at all 30 entry points, solar power on the entire length, eight solar power plants with a capacity of 4000 KW, rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation and 36 replicas of monuments depicting Indian culture and heritage are major features of this expressway. This project has generated employment opportunities of about 50 lakh man-days.

v. Delhi-Meerut Expressway

t. Delhi-Meerut Expressway aims to provide a faster and safer connectivity between Delhi and Meerut and beyond this, with Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The alignment of DME starts from Nizammudin Bridge from Delhi and follows existing NH 24 upto Dasna. While one leg of DME will continue from Dasna on NH 24 to Hapur, a Greenfield alignment has been planned from Dasna to Meerut. The Expressway is being constructed in 4 packages. The total length of the project is 82 km, of which the first 27.74 kms will be 14-laned, while the rest will be 6-lane expressway. The project is likely to cost Rs 4975.17 crore.

The 8.36 km long Package -1 of the projects was inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister in May this year. It is a 14 lane, access-controlled section stretching from Nizammudin Bridge to Delhi UP Border, and was completed in a record time of 18 months as against the earlier expected construction period of 30 months, at a cost of about Rs. 841.50 crore. This is the first National Highway in the country with 14 lanes, and has several features that would help reduce pollution. These include a 2.5-metre-wide cycle track on either side of the highway, a vertical garden on the Yamuna Bridge, solar lighting system and watering of plants through drip irrigation only.

Package II from UP Border to Dasna (19.28 km), Package –III - Dasna to Hapur (22.27) km and Package –IV - Green-field Alignment from Dasna to Meerut –(31.78 km) are under construction and are likely to be completed by March 2019.

vi. Vadodara-Mumbai Expressway

The 473 km expressway will link Ahmedabad-Vadodara Expressway to Mumbai-Pune Expressway thus providing Expressway connectivity from Ahmedabad to Pune for a length of about 650 Km.

vii. Delhi – Mumbai Expressway

This 1250 km Expressway is being developed along a new alignment between Delhi and Mumbai, which passes through backward and tribal districts of Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat. A sum of one lakh crore rupees will be spent on this expressway. It will reduce the distance between Delhi and Mumbai from the present 1450 km through NH 8 to 1250 km, and the travel time to 12 hours. The sections of proposed highway from Delhi to Dahod in Rajasthan are under tendering, while the section between Vadodara to Ankleshwar in Gujarat have already been awarded. The DPR is under progress for the remaining sections.

viii. Bangalore-Chennai Expressway

DPR is under progress for this 260 km Expressway. This is a green-field alignment. There are two existing roads connecting Bangalore-Chennai, one is via Hoskote (Bangalore)-AP then to Chennai & second is via Electronic City (Bangalore) Hosur (Tamil Nadu) and then to Chennai. The alignment of the proposed expressway is passing in between these two stretches.

ix. Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway

Greenfield alignment is being explored for this 500 km long proposed Expressway.

x. Nagpur-Hyderabad-Bangalore (NBH) Expressway

DPR has been awarded and alignment finalization is under progress for the new green-field 940 km Nagpur – Hyderabad – Bangalore EXP.

xi. Kanpur Lucknow (KL) Expressway

DPR is in progress for 75 km of Kanpur – Lucknow EXP

xii. Varanasi Airport Road and Ring Road

Hon'ble Prime Minister inaugurated the 16.55 km, Rs 759.36 crore Varanasi Ring Road Phase-I and 17.25 km, Rs 812.59 crore Babatput-Varanasi road on NH-56 in November. It has reduced the travel time from Varanasi to the airport, and is proving a big relief to the people of Varanasi and to tourists providing a more convenient access to Sarnath, an important site for Buddhist pilgrimage.

xiii. ByetDwarka – Okha Bridge

The Ministry has taken up construction of a signature 4-lane Bridge to connect the mainland at Okha to Byet-Dwarka Island off the Gujarat Coast with this Signature Bridge spanning a length of 2.32 kms. The Project has been awarded on 01.01.2018 at a cost of Rs. 689.47 crores. This will be the longest span cable stayed bridge in India with the main span of 500 mtrs. The project is scheduled to be completed in a period of 30 months.

xiv. Bridge over Ganga in Phaphamau in Allahabad

Approval has been given for a project for construction of 9.9 km long new 6 - lane bridge across river Ganga on NH - 96 at Phaphamau in Allahabad with total capital cost of Rs. 1948.25 crore. The construction period for the project is three years and likely to be completed by December, 2021. The new bridge will resolve the traffic congestion on existing old 2 - lane Phaphamau bridge on NH-96 at Allahabad. The new bridge will also facilitate to the large congregation of people at Holy City Allahabad during Kumbh, Ardh-Kumbh and other yearly ritual baths at SANGAM in Prayag. This will give a boost to pilgrimage tourism and local economy of Holy city of Prayag. This new 6 - lane bridge will also be beneficial for the Lucknow / Faizabad bound traffic coming from Madhya Pradesh via National Highway - 27 and National Highway - 76 through Naini Bridge. In addition, this project of new bridge will generate direct employment during construction for about 9.20 lakh mandays.

xv. Bridge over River Kosi at Phulaut in Bihar

Approval was given to a project for construction of 6.930 km long 4-lane bridge at Phulaut in Bihar, along with approval for rehabilitation and up-gradation of existing Birpur- Bihpur section of National Highway-106. The construction of this new Bridge will fill the existing 30 km long gap between Udakishanganj and Bihpur of National Highway Number 106 in Bihar, which will provide through connectivity between Nepal/ North Bihar/ East-West Corridor (passing through NH- 57) and South Bihar/ Jharkhand/ Golden Quadrilateral (passing through NH -2), besides full utilization of National Highway Number-31.

xvi. Logistics Parks

A network of 35 Multimodal Logistics Parks had been identified for development in the

Phase – 1 of BharatmalaPariyojana. The availability of the land parcels for development of Multimodal Logistics Parks has been confirmed at 7 locations and DPRs have been initiated in all the nodes.

xvii. Zojila Tunnel

This is a project for constructing a 14.150 km long, 2-lane bi-directional Zojila Tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir. This would be India's longest road tunnel and the longest bi-directional tunnel in Asia. The construction of this tunnel will provide all weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh and will bring about all round economic and socio-cultural integration of these regions.

xviii. Silkyara- Bend - Barkot Tunnel

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the construction, operation and maintenance of the 2- Lane, 4.532 Km long Bi-directional Silkyara Bend - Barkot Tunnel on Dharasu-Yamunotri section along NH -134 in the State of Uttarakhand. The project forms part of the Chardham Plan. The construction period of the project is 4 years at an estimated cost of Rs. 1383.78 crore. Once complete, this stretch will reduce the travel distance from Dharasu to Yamunotri by about 20 Km and travel time by about an hour. It will also provide all weather connectivity to Yamunotri, encouraging regional socio-economic development, trade and tourism within the country. The project will be implemented by National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL).

xix. Highways Projects in the North East

Around Rs. 1,90,000 crore worth of projects have been sanctioned for the construction of road projects for over 12,000 km in the North East region. The projects being executed by NHIDCL are to the tune of Rs. 1, 66,026 crore, covering 10,892 km of roads in all the eight NE states. Projects costing Rs. 17,257 crore have been allotted to the respective state PWDs. Further, projects costing Rs. 7,000 crore are entrusted to the NHAI.

. Funding Models and Other Policies to Facilitate Construction of National Highways:

i. Measures to revive Languishing stalled projects

The Ministry has focused on completion of on-going projects along with sanction and award of new projects. A total of 73 projects (8,187 km) worth an estimated investment of Rs. 1,00,000 crore were identified as Languishing Projects. The reasons for delay were identified and policy interventions undertaken to address the same.

ii. Toll-Operate-Transfer Model

The Ministry is monetizing its road assets constructed with public funds through Toll-Operate-Transfer (ToT) scheme. The scheme envisages bidding of bundled national highways for a concession period of 30 years. The first bundle comprised 9 projects, totalling 681 km of roads in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. It was awarded in 2018 to Macquarie for Rs. 9,681 Crore, which was 1.5 times the NHAI's estimate. The second bundle comprises over 586 kms spread over four states – Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal and Bihar. The offer has 12 toll plazas across four highways.

iii. MoU between NHAI and SBI

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the State Bank of India to receive Rs. 25,000 crore as a long-term, unsecured loan for 10 years. This is the largest amount of loan to have been sanctioned

by the SBI in one go. This is also the largest ever fund that NHAI has ever received in one go.

iv. Guidelines for alignment of National Highways

The Ministry has issued detailed guidelines for determination of proper alignment of NH projects, advising executing agencies to examine the feasibility of a green- field alignment, especially in the case of economic corridors, instead of widening existing highways. This has been done because widening involves acquisition of land for Right of Way (RoW), shifting of utilities and demolition of built up structure, all of which involves a lot of time and cost. Also, earlier highways were largely planned to be serpentine, linking all possible towns in the vicinity. This road geometry has been found to be sub optimal, especially in case of economic corridors. Bharatmala Pariyojana also calls for a corridor approach for economic corridors. It has also been found in a few test cases that it is feasible to acquire a RoW of 60 to 70 mtrs for a green field road project at the same cost as involved in the expansion of an existing road, especially when the associated costs and time taken in utility shifting, tree felling, additional compensation for demolition of structures coming in the RoW under expansion are taken into account.

v. Platform for e-Gazetting and Payment of Compensation for Land Acquisition through PFMS

A Web Utility has been developed whereby the land acquisition procedure for the NH projects, including processing of all LA related gazette notifications, are being done through a common platform called "Bhoomi Rashi". The Utility has been linked with the e-gazette platform of the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India, for publication of Gazette Notifications. The use of Bhumi Rashi has helped in cutting down the processing time from 2 to 3 months earlier to one to two weeks now.

Bhoomi Rashi has also been integrated with the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) platform of the Ministry of Finance for deposit of compensation in the accounts of landowners/interested persons on a real time basis, instead of being parked with CALA.

vi. Bidder Information Management System

The Ministry has developed a Bidder Information Management System (BIMS) to streamline the process of pre-qualification of bidders for contracts on EPC mode for all NH works and centrally sponsored works. BIMS acts as a data base for all basic details of bidders like civil works experience, cash accruals and network, annual turnover etc,. This allows quick pre-qualification assessment of bidders based on evaluation parameters like threshold capacity and bid capacity from already stored data. Technical evaluation can therefore be carried out faster using this information.

vii. Launch of Annual Awards for Excellence In National Highways Sector

Annual awards for excellence in National Highways sector has been instituted from this year onwards for recognizing concessionaires and contractors who have been performing exceptionally well. Applications have been invited from all the concessionaires and contractors working in the field of highways construction and tolling. These awards are designed across the five categories of construction management, operation and maintenance, best toll plaza, safest highway, innovation in design and construction technology.

viii. Highway Capacity Manual

India's first Highway Capacity Manual developed by CSIR-CRRI was launched this year. The manual is designed to be a tool for guiding road engineers and policy makers in the country. It lays down guidelines for the development and management of different types of roads, based on traffic characteristics on such roads having varying lane configurations.

ix. Workshop on issues relating to Land Acquisition, Contract Document etc.

The Ministry has organized a workshop on 18.12.2018 in Delhi for Regional Officers of Ministry, NHAI and NHIDCL to discuss the issues relating to land acquisition, contract document (EPC/DPR) and E-Disha (ERP projects), new standards and technical specifications. A Manual of Guidelines on Land Acquisition for National Highways under the National Highways Act, 1956 has also been released for seamless process of Land Acquisition for National Highways.

3. ROAD SAFETY Reduction in number of road accidents

As per the Ministry's annual report on road accidents based on the data reported by Police authorities throughout India, there has been some marginal reduction in the number of road accidents and fatalities in 2017, as can be seen from the table below.

Parameter	2016	2017	% changeover previous year
Number of road accidents	4,80,652	4,64,910	(-) 3.3
No. of persons killed	1,50,785	1,47,913	(-) 1.9

The Ministry has been making concerted efforts to address the problem of road safety through a series of measures that include improving road infrastructure, road safety audits, identification and rectification of black spots on roads and strengthening the automobile safety standards, organizing road safety awareness programmes and strengthening enforcement etc. These efforts have started showing some results.

1. Rectification of Accident Black Spots

The Ministry has so far identified 789 road accident black spots in various States of which 651 ON National Highways and 138 are on State roads. Work for rectification of these black spots is at various stages of completion.

1. Guidelines for setting up Driver Training Schools in districts

The Ministry has been working in association with States, Vehicle manufactures and NGOs for strengthening the driving training. Institute of Driving training and Research (IDTRs), Regional Driving Training Centres (RDTCs) and Driving Training Centre (DTC) have been established which act as model Driving Training Centres with state of art infrastructure. Ministry has also launched a scheme for creating driving training centres in all the districts of the country and support refresher-training programme for heavy commercial vehicles drivers. The Ministry is implementing a scheme for setting up of Model Institute of Drivers Training and Research (IDTR) by States/UTs. So far 24 (nos.) ITDRs have been sanctioned in different States/UTs and bout 16 are complete and functioning.

1. Guidelines for financing NGOs for road safety advocacy

The Ministry has issued guidelines associating Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for promoting awareness about road safety under a scheme titled "Grant of financial assistance for administering Road Safety Advocacy and awards for the outstanding work done in the field of Road Safety". It is envisaged that the NGOs will undertake activities for creating road safety awareness among citizens.

1. SukhadYatra App and Toll-Free Emergency Number

A mobile App and Toll-free Emergency number 1033 for highway users, developed by NHAI, were launched in March this year. The SukhadYatra mobile application provides information on toll gates. The key feature of the app includes a provision for the user to enter road quality-related information or to report any accident or pothole on the highway. It also provides users with real-time data related to waiting time expected at toll plazas and various facilities like points of interest, highway rest/ rest mini, etc. The app can also be used to purchase FASTags.

The toll-free number 1033 will enable users to report an emergency condition, or highway-related feedback, across the highway. The service has also been integrated with ambulance / tow away services along the roads.

1. Observance of the 29th National Road Safety Week

This Ministry observed the 29th National Road Safety Week from 23rd to 30th April 2018. This year's focus was on schools and commercial drivers and the theme was "Sadak Suraksha JeevanRaksha". In the opening ceremony the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways emphasized the Ministry's priorities in ensuring safety of road users in the country. Awards were given to 10 school children who won the national level essay competition on road safety. The Hon'ble Minister also administered the road safety pledge to all those present on the occasion. A variety of programmes related to the Road Safety were also organized in several cities across the country to enlighten people on Road Safety, and Driving Rules. Many NGOs participated in the Ministry's efforts to create awareness about the issue.

1. GoM on Road Safety

The Ministry had constituted a group of State Transport Ministers under the Chairmanship of Shri Yunus Khan, Transport Minister of Rajasthan to work out interstate issues and reach a consensus on adoption of uniform rates of taxation, permits and other issues. A Group of Transport Ministers from 13 states met in Guwahati on 18-19 April this year and adopted a 9-Point Guwahati Declaration aimed at harmonization of taxes and permits, road safety measures, policy changes and measures for strengthening State Road Transport Undertakings. The most important decisions taken by during the meeting included the recommendation for One Nation One Tax for the diverse road tax structure, which would ease travel.

1. Rs. 5 Lakh Compensation to accident victims:

In order to help accident victims in getting reasonable and fast compensation from insurance companies, the Ministry revised the relevant rules of the Motor Vehicles Act according to which every accident victim or his next of kin will be entitled to a compensation of Rs 5 lakh in case of death, and upto Rs 5 lakh, proportionate to the extent of injury in case of grievous hurt and disablement. Accident victims can claim higher compensation through court if they are not satisfied, but with this rule even the poorest of the poor will get a fast and reasonable compensation.

1. CCTV installation at Toll Plazas:

A Central Command and Control Centre is being set up at the NHAI HQ for CCTV surveillance and Monitoring of Vehicular Congestion at 210 Fee Plazas of National Highways that have higher traffic volumes. It is proposed to be connected with Regional Offices and the project execution is on service model for a period of five years.

1. Films on Road Safety:

Three short films for generating public awareness for the need to comply with the rules of the road, eventually contributing to the cause of road safety, were launched by Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport & Highways, on 14th August, 2018. Film actor Shri Akshay Kumar who featured in these films on pro bono basis, has also been appointed as Road Safety Brand Ambassador by the Hon'ble Minister.

1. Capacity Building in the area of Road Safety:

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has designated the Asian Institute of Transport Development as an apex body for capacity building in the area of road safety. The objective is that this centre would act as a depository of research studies and best practices. Human resource development and exchange of knowledge form an important component of its activities. Up to October 2018, the National Centre for Road Safety has been able to train over 1,400 professionals in road safety and road safety audit by conducting 31 courses pan India.

4. INITIATIVES IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR:

The Ministry took several initiatives in the transport sector during the year to make road travel more convenient for people. Some of these areas under-

1. Simplification of Driving License Application

To improve ease in licensing, this Ministry has simplified the driving license application form. Four forms i.e. (a) Learner License, (b) Driving License, (c) Renewal of License, and (d) updation of Address - all have been consolidated into one. The new form will enable Aadhar based verification of the applicant's identity to provide online services for renewal, change of address etc. Another highlight of the new form is that it would capture an applicant's willingness for organ donation.

1. Revision of Axle Weight:

The permissible safe axle weight of goods vehicles was revised and increased by about 15% to 20 % for different configurations of axles. The decision was taken with a view to help in increasing the carrying capacity of goods transport vehicles and bring down logistics cost. The amendment will increase the carrying capacity of goods vehicles by about 20-25 % and lower logistics costs by about 2%. It will also bring down the incidence of overloading. While automobile technology and road construction quality have improved greatly over the years, the axle loads have remained the same since 1983 when they were last notified. There was a felt need to harmonize the axle load with international standards.

1. Launch of Ranking System for Toll Plazas

NHAI has developed a matrix-based methodology to rank the Fee Plazas on parameters such as electronic tolling, time taken in clearance of FASTag lanes, display panels, staff behaviour, cleanliness, etc. The data for the matrix is to be collected by the Regional Officers who will use the same to rank the Fee Plazas under their

jurisdiction. Meanwhile, a countrywide drive was launched by NHAI on more than 300 toll plazas across the country on 10 February, 2018, to address issues that affect highway users. Officers visited toll plazas and addressed issues of user convenience and took feedback from the people.

1. Revision in Maximum Speed of vehicles

The Ministry has revised the maximum speed of various classes of vehicles vide notification dated 6th April 2018. The notification prescribes the speed of various classes of vehicles. Thus a passenger vehicle with not more than 8 seats including driver can have a maximum speed of 120 km/hr on expressways and 70km/hr on municipal roads.

1. Acceptance of Documents through DigiLocker and mParivahan Platform

An advisory has been issued by the Ministry to all the States / UTs to accept the documents in electronic form through DigiLocker platform of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India and the mParivahan mobile app of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways. Such electronic records available on DigiLocker or mParivahan are deemed to be legally recognized at par with the original documents as per the provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2000. This will also address Grievances / RTI applications of the citizens and facilitate promotion of Digital India campaign.

1. Notification regarding Vehicle Location Tracking Device and Emergency Button in all public service vehicles

With a view to enhancing the safety of women passengers, detailed standards for Installation of Vehicle Location Tracking Device (VLT) and Emergency Button on public service vehicles have been notified on October 25, 2018. The States/ UTs have been mandated to ensure compliance of the rule and check fitment and functional status of the VLT device in the public service vehicles at the time of checking of the vehicles for fitness certification. The Command and Control Centres in the States will be used to provide interface to various stakeholders such as State emergency response centre, the Transport authorities of the state and central governments, device manufacturers and their authorized dealers, testing agencies etc. The Command and control Centre will also be able to provide feed to the VAHAN database or the relevant data base of the state with regard to over speeding and the health status of the device.

1. Fitness Certificate in respect of Transport Vehicle

As per this notification the renewal of the fitness certificate in respect of transport vehicle up to eight years old shall be done for two years and for one year for vehicle older than eight years. No fitness certification shall be required at the time of registration for the new transport vehicle sold as fully built vehicle and such vehicle shall be deemed to be having certificate of fitness for a period of two years from the date of registration.

1. Use of Dual Fuel

The Ministry has issued a notification for Dual fuel usage which covers Emission of smoke and vapour from agriculture tractors, power tillers, construction equipment vehicles and combine harvesters driven by dual fuel diesel with Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) or Bio-Compressed Natural Gas (Bio-CNG) or Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) engines.

5. GREEN INITIATIVES: Electric, Ethanol and Methanol Vehicles exempted from Permit

Keeping in view the need for promoting electric mobility and alternate fuels, the Ministry, vide notification issued on October 18, 2018, has exempted Battery Operated Vehicles, as well as vehicles driven on Methanol fuel or Ethanol fuel, from the requirement of permit for carrying passengers or goods.

1. Advisory on Linking of PUC data (emission related data) with the VAHAN database

A system has been developed and tested by this Ministry for linking of Pollution Under Control (PUC) data with the VAHAN database. An advisory dated October 1, 2018 has been issued to all the States by the Ministry wherein all the PUC vendors have been directed to comply with the guidelines and facilitate electronic uploading of emissions test data to VAHAN database.

1. Notification regarding Registration Mark of Battery Operated Vehicles

To give a distinct identity to the electric vehicles, it has been decided that the registration mark will be exhibited on a number plate with Green background. A notification to this effect was issued on 7th August, 2018.

1. M 15 (15%) Methanol blending with Gasoline

The Ministry issued a notification regarding the blending of Gasoline with methanol in order to reduce vehicle exhaust emissions and also to reduce the import burden on account of crude petroleum from which gasoline is produced. The Hon'ble Prime Minister had announced an ambitious target of reducing 10% import dependence of oil and gas by 2022 from 2014-15 levels. Methanol can be used as an alternative transportation fuel thereby reducing import dependence to some extent.

1. Requirement of PUC Certificate for vehicle insurance/ renewal of insurance

The Ministry has requested IRDA and the MDs / Chairpersons of all general insurance companies to ensure that no third-party insurance policy is issued or renewed without ascertaining the availability of a valid PUC. This has been done following orders of the Supreme Court of India.

1. Emission Standards for Construction Equipment Vehicles and Tractors

The Ministry has notified emission standards for Construction Equipment Vehicles and Tractors. These standards would be implemented w.e.f. 1st October, 2020 (Trem IV) and from 1st April, 2024 [Bharat Stage (CEV/Trem)-V]. This would help in ensuring environment friendly construction / mining activities.

1. Quadricycles included as Non-Transport Vehicles

The Ministry notified the insertion of the item 'Quadricycle' as a 'non-transport' vehicle under the Motor Vehicles Act 1988. A Quadricycle is a vehicle of the size of a 3-wheeler but with 4 tyres and fully covered like a car. It has an engine like that of a 3-wheeler. This makes it a cheap and safe mode of transport for last mile connectivity. Quadricycles were only allowed for transport usage under the Act, but now has been made usable for non-transport also.

6. E INITIATIVES:

6.1 National Award on e-Governance to INAMPRO

The "INAMPRO" project initiated by NHIDCL, a CPSE under this Ministry, has been

conferred with a 'Gold' award under Category- I "Excellence in Government Process Re-engineering" for the National Award in e-Governance by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.

6.2 Electronic Toll Collection (ETC)

The Electronic Toll Collection Program has seen exponential growth in terms of number of Fastags sold and user fees collected electronically. With a total number of 440 Toll Plazas, more than 34.3 lakh Fastags units have been issued till October this year, and 25 to 27% of the revenues are being collected using the ETC mode. Use of FASTag has also seen significant growth, both in terms of user fees collected and penetration, from Rs 210.1 Cr with 13.1% penetration in April 2017 to Rs 446.8 Cr with 24.8% penetration in the month of August 2018.

6.3 Linkage of PFMS with Bidder Information Management System (BIMS) and BhoomiRashi

The two IT initiatives of this Ministry, which are aimed at expediting pre-construction processes relating to bidding and land acquisition respectively, have now been integrated with the Public Financial management System (PFMS). The Bidder Information Management System (BIMS) is aimed at streamlining the process of pre-qualification of bidders for EPC Mode of contracts for National Highway works with enhanced transparency and objectivity. The BhoomiRashi portal of Ministry of Road Transport & Highways allows for totally digital and paper-less processing of land acquisition cases, and has resulted in transparent, quick, corruption-free and error-free handling of land acquisition cases. It has also made the possible real-time tracking of activities and generation of reports relating to land acquisition. Revenue records of about 7 lakh villages across the country have been integrated in the portal. This digital change has drastically reduced the time taken for issuance of land acquisition notifications from 3-6 months to 1-2 weeks. Over 2000 notifications have already been issued by the Ministry in the first eight months of this financial year that while during the past two years, about a thousand land acquisition notifications could be issued every year. The process has also brought transparency in the system. Earlier the approved compensation amount used to be parked with the CALA (Competent Authority for Land Acquisition) but with BhoomiRashi portal this amount directly transferred into the account of the person concerned, through Public Financial Management System which is an integral part of the portal. In addition to this, the process is also environment friendly since there is no physical movement of files – all work is done digitally.

1. Advisory regarding keeping transport related documents in an electronic form

An advisory has been issued by this Ministry wherein the citizen can produce the transport related documents such as registration, insurance, fitness and permit, the driving licence, certificate for pollution under check and any other relevant documents, if required, in physical or electronic form, on demand by any police officer in uniform or any other officer authorized by the State Government in this behalf. This would enable the use of digital platforms for carrying and verification of the documents and is a step towards citizen facilitation and to ensure so that citizen are not harassed/inconvenienced.

7. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION MoU with Transport for London

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways signed a MoU with Transport for London

(TFL) on 10th January, 2018. TFL is an agency that manages the transport system for Greater London, and has demonstrated its capability by creating strong and dependable public transport system in the city of London. It has created a unique system of operating buses in PPP model with over 17 operators under a single brand. The MoUs aimed at using the expertise of TFL to revamp the public transport architecture in the country.

1. 2ND meeting of India-Nepal Cross Border Transport Facilitation Working Group

After a long hiatus, the 2nd meeting of India-Nepal Cross Border Transport Facilitation Working Group was held at Kathmandu on 23rd February, 2018 under the India-Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement for regulation of vehicular traffic between the two countries. It was agreed to start regular bus services on the new routes of Mahendrangar- Dehradun, Nepalgunj- Haridwar, Nepalgunj-Lucknow, Nepalgunj - Delhi and Kathmandu-Gorakhpur, through designated operators from Nepal and India. It was also agreed to start operation of bus services on Kathmandu -Siliguri and Janakpur- Patna routes. Both sides also noted with mutual interest the possibility of opening of other routes to be considered on the basis of commercial demand and availability of infrastructure by mutual consent.

1. Bus trial run across Bangladesh, India and Nepal

Taking another step towards furthering seamless passenger vehicle movement across Bangladesh, India and Nepal (BIN) under BBIN MVA signed in June 2015. A trial run of two passenger buses from Dhaka, was conducted in April, 2018, with 43 passengers. The trial run started from Dhaka on 23rd April and reached Kathmandu on 26th April 2018. The participating countries have also agreed to conduct more trial runs for cargo vehicles under the agreement.

1. First Working Group Meeting of BIMSTEC

The first Working Group meeting of BIMSTEC to negotiate the draft text of Motor Vehicles Agreement for the regulation of passenger and cargo vehicular traffic among and between member states was held in April this year. Delegations from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Myanmar attended the meeting. The draft text of the agreement was discussed and amended. The member countries will further examine the amended text.

1. MoU between India and Uganda

An MoU was signed between the Central Materials Laboratory (ML), Kampala, Uganda and the Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE) under Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, India, during the visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Uganda on 24-25 July, 2018, for establishment of a Regional Materials Testing Laboratory for Highways in Uganda.

1. 65th India-Japan Joint Working Group Meeting in the Roads and Road Transport Sector

The 5th India-Japan Joint Working Group Meeting in the Roads and Road Transport Sector was held on 12th November, 2018 in New Delhi as provided under the Framework of Cooperation (FoC) between the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), India and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), Japan. In the meeting, information regarding the latest technological developments in "Operation and Maintenance of Expressway", "Development of Mountainous Road in North East Regions" and "Countermeasure of Aging Structure"

etc. was shared.

1. MoU of India with Russia

The proposal for a MoU on Bilateral Cooperation in the Road Transport & Road Industry sector, between Ministry of road transport & Highways and the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation, has been approved by the Union Cabinet in its meeting on October 3, 2018.

8. OTHERS: Wayside Amenities and Highway Nest (Mini)

While the procurement process is under way for the development of Wayside Amenities of larger sizes in PPP mode along the National Highways, the NHAI has taken up construction of 314 numbers Highway Nest (mini). These are being developed near Toll Plazas, approximately 200 meters downstream on a 10mX20m paved platform and comprises of facilities like toilets, water, ATR, a small kiosk with Tea / Coffee vending machine and packaged food items for Highway users.

1. SwachhtaPakhwada and 'Swachhta Hi Sewa' Campagin (SHS)

The SwachhtaPakhwada was organised by the Ministry between September 15, 2018 and October 2, across all National Highways. Several activities related to shramdaan and cleaning of schools in villages adjacent to the National Highways were also organized by the NHAI during the period. Construction of toilets, both for men and women, installation of litter-bins and hoardings at NHAI toll plazas have been taken up by the Ministry under Swachh Bharat Mission. The Ministry was conferred with a special award for its implementation of the Swachhta Action Plan for 2017-18 by the nodal Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

NP/MS

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