

ELECTRIC VEHICLE: GOVT TO BUILD 6,000 KM OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE-READY HIGHWAYS ON GOLDEN QUADRILATERAL

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Infrastructure: Roads

New Delhi: The government is working on a plan to build electric vehicle-ready [highways](#) on the Golden Quadrilateral in a major effort towards reducing [fuel consumption](#) and [vehicular emissions](#) through electrification of intercity public transport. People in the know told ET that the Centre is looking to develop 6,000 km of these highways.

This is planned over the next seven years to accelerate the adoption of [e-mobility](#) and support the deployment of e-buses across the country. These [e-highways](#) would be powered with green energy-enabled charging infrastructure.

The programme is being envisaged as part of the proposed Vision 2030: PM Public Transport Sewa.

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"The development of electric highways is likely to happen simultaneously with induction of [electric buses](#) accelerating the establishment of an ecosystem for EVs in India," said one of the persons cited above.

The government has initiated talks with stakeholders to replace 800,000 old, polluting diesel buses with electric ones by 2030. This includes 200,000 electric buses for state transport undertakings, 550,000 for private operators and 50,000 for schools and employee transportation.

The new e-highways are expected to catalyse the development of charging infrastructure, spurring more people to buy electric cars for everyday commutes. Sales of electric cars last year stood at 83,000 units, shy of the targeted 100,000 mark, as first-time buyers kept away from electric as the only option for their choice of vehicle. Consumers are sceptical of the range and the inadequate charging infrastructure for EVs in the country, making them opt for such vehicles only as a second or third personal mode of transport.

The Golden Quadrilateral (GQ) is the longest highway network in the country connecting the four metros of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai - and along with them several industrial, agricultural and cultural hubs. The North-South Corridor connecting Srinagar (in Jammu & Kashmir) and Kanyakumari (in Tamil Nadu) and the East-West Corridor connecting Silchar (in Assam) to Porbandar (in Gujarat) are additional projects. The development of e-highways on the GQ is likely to give a significant boost to the government's aim to reduce logistics costs and at the same time, curb emissions in line with COP28 guidelines.

Confirming the plans to build e-highways, a senior government official said on condition of anonymity, "The government's focus is to convert roads into electric highways to help substantially reduce logistic costs and bring down pollution levels in the country by switching to green mobility."

Electric highways are an energy-efficient option where the roadway provides electricity to moving vehicles mostly through overhead power lines. Currently, the world's longest e-highway spanning 109 km is operational in Berlin, Germany.

ET

According to the official, the ministry of [road transport](#) & highways plans to award electrified highways on build, operate, and transfer (BOT) model to private companies. Work is also on to identify and convert existing highways into e-highways by setting up enough charging stations for electric buses to ply between cities, thus giving a boost to cost-effective green intercity public transport. Under this, the cost will be borne by the Centre and states.

In September last year, minister for road, transport & highways [Nitin Gadkari](#) had said the government is looking at developing electric highways as it is economically viable and is considering various technologies for implementation. The power ministry could provide electricity at subsidised rates, the minister had said, adding private investors could construct electric lines on identified routes and National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) can implement an electric tariff system, similar to the tolls payable currently on highways.

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