

AMRIT SAROVAR MISSION COULD BOOST INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

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Optimum use: Rural Development Ministry tells NHAI to map its project with Amrit Sarovar. Special Arrangement SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In a move that could expedite the implementation of railway and highway projects across the country, the Centre has asked the Ministry of Railways and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to use the soil or silt excavated from ponds and tanks in all districts under the *Amrit Sarovar* mission for their infrastructure projects.

The water conservation mission launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 24 aims at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district in all States as part of the celebrations of *Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav*. At least 50,000 waterbodies are expected to be rejuvenated during the nationwide programme that would culminate on August 15, 2023.

Since the project would involve excavation of several thousands of tonnes of earth in the form of soil or silt, the Ministry of Rural Development has told the Ministry of Railways and the NHAI to map its infrastructure projects with the Amrit Sarovar sites in all States and UTs.

The General Managers of all Zonal Railways were told to nominate the Chief Administrative Officer (Construction) as the nodal officer who would identify the nearest sites of *Amrit Sarovar* to ongoing railway projects, study the suitability of the desilted soil and silt and submit a feasibility report at the earliest.

According to railway sources, many railway projects were held up due to the delay in getting the required quantity of burrow earth from the local authorities. Though the issue was flagged at the appropriate level, the timely availability of earth remained a challenge.

Road projects

According to official sources, the *Amrit Sarovar* mission will cater to the requirements of projects being implemented by the NHAI.

In Tamil Nadu, the issue of allowing contractors to lift burrow earth became so intense that in February this year the NHAI threatened to cancel the road widening work of East Coast Road between Mamallapuram and Puducherry.

However, the issue was resolved after the State government assured them of resolving the issue.

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