

Roads & Highways
01. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is likely to introduce Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) system as a pilot project

The Parliamentary Committee had directed the Ministry to explore the feasibility of ERP system and submit a report within 3 months to Parliament. The Ministry is silent whether the pilot project would be implemented in Delhi or some other metropolitan cities

ERP rates vary for roads and time periods depending on local traffic conditions. This encourages motorists to change their mode of transport, travel route or time of travel. The process of levying the tax is automatic. A device known as an in-vehicle unit (IU) is fixed on the lower right corner of the front windscreen within sight of the driver. A stored-value cash card is inserted into it for payment. The tax gets deducted depending on location and time

02. Bankers are willing to fund selective HAM road projects but are skeptical on the toll-operate models as they grapple with large NPAs in the sector

A senior BOI executive said, "As far as HAM projects go, we are largely safe as they are bound to make the repayments. In toll-based projects, there is always a risk involved. If the COD (commercial operational date) is not achieved, then there may be some political and other issues and also poor toll collections, due to which our repayments get stuck."

Gadkari remarked, "Three years ago there was a lot of problem with contractors and banks. There were defaults. At that time 403 projects aggregating Rs 3.85 lakh crore were stalled. And in 75 percent of the cases the government was responsible. Land acquisition, environment, forest clearance, etc., were the problems. Now, we have cleared all these"

ICRA Rating Agency : Till FY14, projects were awarded based on the BOT (toll) first, followed by BOT (Annuity) and then EPC. Of late, HAM, a mix of EPC and BOT (Annuity) models, is implemented where government and private sector share the project cost. HAM is currently the most preferred mode of awarding projects and about 53 percent of the awards in FY17 by NHA were through this route, compared to 8 percent in FY16 and this is likely to increase further in 2017-18

03. NHA will likely be launching an initial share sale after getting approval from the Finance Ministry

"The government is confident of getting investor subscriptions of up to Rs 10 lakh crore," said Nitin Gadkari. The minister also said that the private sector-led Public Private Partnership (PPP) or Build Operate Transfer (BOT) routes is the ideal way to do infrastructure projects & that the ministry will start using the TOT (toll operate transfer) in about six months

He said if the auto sales continue to grow at the current pace, the government will have to build an additional lane in the over 2 lakh km NH network every 3 years, which will entail an investment of Rs 80,000 crore

He said the government is mulling to start 30 rural connectivity projects at an investment of Rs 8 lakh crore, of which five will be started in three months. Gadkari also warned cement companies against cartelisation and rising prices, saying there's a pending proposal to increase output through ten state-run plants which can be activated

04. Soil nailing technology has come to the aid of the NHA for the stabilisation of steep slopes along the Kazhakkuttam-Karode bypass corridor of the NH-66

L & T has been asked to use the soil nailing technology for the project as the green field 4-lane concrete highway being developed traverses through undulating terrain. NHA had used the technology for the first time in the State when embankment in the 26.79 km Reach I from Kazhakkuttam-Mukkola slipped during the four-laning works

For slopes up to 4 metres high, the NHA is constructing retaining wall for stability and to prevent caving in of the earth. Metal rods of 25 mm to 32 mm are inserted into the pre-drilled hole in the soil at inclination of 10 to 20 degrees. It is then cement grouted under gravity or low pressure and geotextiles is applied to ensure stability. The NHA is using the expertise of the IIT Chennai for the soil nailing technology in the bypass corridors that is being four-laned through EPC mode

05. Canada-based pension funds PSP Investments and Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan are in talks to invest Rs 4,000 crore in an investment platform co-promoted by the Gol-sponsored National Investment and Infrastructure Fund

The government-sponsored fund is also separately said to be in discussions with Middle East-based sovereign wealth funds to arrange commitments as it looks to put together a corpus of \$5 billion to support infrastructure investments in railways, ports and the renewable energy sector

Canada Pension Plan Investment Board had struck a deal with L&T to invest Rs 1,000 crore in its road projects 3 years ago

06. Nitin Gadkari has asked transport ministers of states to submit suggestions on tax and permit issues

He also urged the states to build modern bus ports on the lines of the one built in Vadodara. Calling for better standards of buses besides double-decker ones, Gadkari stressed that there is need to ply such buses on an inter-state basis. The states ministers were taken on a guided tour of the Vadodara bus terminal and the Vadodara automated driving testing track to help them get a first-hand account of such modern facilities

07. The NGT, in response to a plea alleging that the road widening work for the project was being carried in violation of the Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone Notification, issued notices to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, MoRTH, NHIDCL, BRO and Uttarakhand government

PM Modi in December last year had laid the foundation stone for the Chardham highway development project to be built with an investment of Rs 12,000 crore in Uttarakhand. The four pilgrimage towns to have all-weather connectivity by the 900 km- long highway are Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunotri and Gangotri

08. The NHA has proposed development of a 'Third Ring Road' in Delhi to ease the burden on perennially congested arterial roads

The 49 km corridor will be completed in two phases. In the first phase, work will be completed between NH-1 and NH-8 while the second phase will connect NH-8 with NH-10 and NH-2

09. The proposed 351 km long Purvanchal Expressway, is all set to get a push from the Centre

Niti Aayog has proposed that, considering the bad financial position of UP government, the Centre may fund the Rs 20,000 crore Purvanchal Expressway between Lucknow and Ghazipur and will also connect the two religious cities Ayodhya and Varanasi. A correspondence regarding this has been exchanged between top UP officials, Niti Aayog as well as PM Modi's office

10. The government has managed to save Rs 3 lakh crore worth bank loans to the road sector from turning into NPAs, according to Mr. Nitin Gadkari

He said around 403 projects with an exposure of Rs. 3 lakh crore were stalled when the NDA government came to power in 2014. The government managed to revive most of these projects. The government terminated projects worth Rs.500 lakh crore to set an example. Currently, there is not a single stalled road project, the minister claimed

11. The opening of bids for the ambitious Bengaluru Mysuru expressway project has got delayed further

NHA can open the bids only after the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the prime minister clears the Rs 7,000-crore project, which is divided into two packages of 56.2 km (Bengaluru-Nidagatta) and 61.1 km (Nidagatta-Mysuru). It will have 10-lanes including two-lane service roads on either side, and three-lane main carriageway in each direction

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12. CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami has said that the 70 km stretch from Namakkal to Tiruchi will be made 4-lane and steps will be taken to upgrade it as NH, with land acquisition for the same beginning soon

Tamil Nadu: The CM said that a combined water scheme that benefits 3.57 lakh people in 669 villages in Padaveedu, Tiruchengodu, Pallipalayam and Sankari will be implemented. He added that a sub-way will be constructed near the Pallipalayam Railway Station on the Kumarapalayam – Pallipalayam – Jedarpalayam – Pandamangalam – Velur Road (SH 198)

13. Nitin Gadkari said the construction work of Rs 44,000 crore Mumbai-Vadodara Expressway will begin in a month, after which one can cover the distance between the two cities in less than 3 hours



He said his government is also working to add 12 Expressway projects and has announced construction of additional 1.7 lakh kilometres out of 4 lakh kilometres NHs planned to help decongest existing roads

14. Former FM Prafulla Chandra Ghadei has sought the intervention of Nitin Gadkari in expediting the much-delayed 4-laning work of Chandikhole-Duburi-Talcher section of NH-200

Ghadei said though the 133-km long project was awarded to ISOLUX Corsan, a foreign construction company, by NHAI, the firm has not started the work. Instead, it has damaged the existing 2-lane road

15. An elevated 4-lane corridor might come up on the Edappally-Aroor NH-47 Bypass

DPR on how to decongest the stretch which carries over 77,000 passenger car units (PCUs) daily is expected to be ready by mid-2018. The cost per km is estimated to be around Rs. 120 crore. NHAI will take a final decision after Feedback Infra Private Limited submits its DPR shortly on developing the 30-km-long Edappally-Thuravur NH stretch

16. Government is exploring a plan to raise Rs10 trillion from retirees and provident fund beneficiaries, said transport minister Nitin Gadkari. The plan aims to raise money in tranches of Rs10,000 crore by selling 10-year bonds at a coupon of 7.25-7.75%

Coal Mining

01. Breaking the 41-year-old stranglehold of state-owned Coal India Ltd, the government has decided to offer 10 mines for auction as a first step in opening up India's commercial mining market for coal

4 coal mines from Odisha are likely to be auctioned in the first phase — Chendipada, Chendipada-II, Mahanadi and Machhakata; four coal mines from Chhattisgarh — Shankarpur Bhatgaon II Extension, Durgapur II/ Taraimar, Durgapur II/Sariya, Madanpur (North) — and one each from Madhya Pradesh (Dongri Tal-II) and Jharkhand (Mednirai). The Centre is yet to decide the timeline to auction these ten coal mines

Ports

01. A rigid regulatory framework and market dynamics threaten to run aground contracts worth thousands of crores of rupees at PPP projects at India's major ports or those owned by the Centre



Kandla Port Trust scrapped two PPP projects in August. At Visakhapatnam Port Trust, 4 PPP projects are under stress from rate issues and other tender terms, which could force termination in some cases

Across geographies, every PPP project is in litigation/arbitration with the government with court cases being filed by terminal operators individually and collectively under the banner of the Indian Private Ports and Terminals Association (IPPTA), over rate setting, lack of dredging on time, delayed environment and security clearance and insufficient yard space

Irrigation

01. The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) gave wildlife clearance for the Dr BR Ambedkar Pranahita Irrigation Canal project

The Rs 4,200 crore project was awaiting wildlife clearance as diversion of 622 hectare of forest land falling in the tiger corridor. With wildlife clearance in hand, the process becomes easier for getting forest clearance. The wildlife clearance has been given by NBWL on the basis of construction of 18 eco-bridges over the canal for facilitating movement of tigers and other mammals from one side to another

02. The ₹389.31 crore Gateshwar Panth Canal Project, which was set to be inaugurated by Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, suffered a major blow as a part of the dam collapsed just 24 hours before the inaugural ceremony

03. Nitin Gadkari gave his assurances to bring 40% of cultivable land under irrigation in Maharashtra by the end of the BJP state government's term

"PM Narendra Modi and I have decided to allocate Rs75,000 crores to fund irrigation projects in the country" said Gadkari

Having received the additional charge of the union water resource ministry, Gadkari is now eyeing to restart dormant irrigation projects in the state. Gadkari told state's energy minister, Chandrashekhar Bawankule to provide him with a list of all irrigation projects which are incomplete within eight days so that funds can be allocated

Competitor News

01.  INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPERS LTD.

MEP Infrastructure has won a contract for toll collection at the border points entering Delhi from specified commercial vehicles for a period of 5 years. As per the contract, the company has been engaged as the contractor for South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) for toll and ECC collection for a period of five years for Rs 1,206 crore per annum payable to SDMC on a weekly basis