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Cabinet Portfolio Announcement Highlights: Cabinet Portfolios Announced, No Change In Big 4 In Modi 3.0  
NDTV,  
June 11, 2024

Highlights: Of the 72 ministers, including the Prime Minister, 30 are Cabinet Ministers, five independent charge, and 36 Ministers of State.



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Highlights: Prime Minister, 30 are Cabinet Ministers, five Ministers Of State with Independent charge.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took oath with 71 ministers yesterday to form the new coalition government. President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath to the incoming ministers. Prime Minister, 30 are Cabinet Ministers, five Ministers Of State with Independent charge, and 36 Ministers of State.

Amit Shah has retained the Ministry of Home Affairs, and Rajnath Singh has retained the Defence Ministry in Modi 3.0. Meanwhile, Nitin Gadkari has also retained the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. Ajay Tamta and Harsh Malhotra have been appointed as Ministers of State in the ministry.

HD Kumaraswamy of the Janata Dal (Secular), who took oath after Mr Khattar, was the first leader from any of the BJP's allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to take oath. Soon after, Janata Dal (United) leader Lalan Singh, a close aide of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, also took the oath.

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### Central government infra projects face record Rs 5.5 lakh crore cost overruns, Indian Railways hit hardest

The Financial Express,  
June 11, 2024

Despite government's continuous efforts to streamline project execution, the data reveals significant challenges in achieving timely and cost-effective infrastructure development.

Among the delayed projects, 220 experienced delays ranging from 1-12 months, 192 were delayed for 13-24 months, 259 for 25-60 months, and 121 projects faced delays exceeding 60 months.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has revealed cost overruns exceeding Rs 5.5 lakh crore in 448 infrastructure projects in April 2024. Notably, the ratio of cost overruns in central government projects surged to a 12-month high of 20.09 percent in April, up from 18.65 percent in the previous month. Out of the 1,838 projects assessed, 448 reported cost overruns and 792 experienced delays.

The original cost of these 1,838 projects, each valued at Rs 150 crore or more, was Rs 27,64,246.50 crore. However, their anticipated completion cost is now projected at Rs 33,19,601.84 crore, marking an increase of Rs 5.6 lakh crore over the original estimates. The MoSPI report also noted that the number of delayed projects decreased to 514 when calculated based on the latest completion schedule.

Among the delayed projects, 220 experienced delays ranging from 1-12 months, 192 were delayed for 13-24 months, 259 for 25-60 months, and 121 projects faced delays exceeding 60 months.

Infrastructure growth momentum to continue, Icra predicts robust growth with increased allocations



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Despite these setbacks, 61 projects were completed in April, while 29 new projects were initiated. The cost of completed projects in April was Rs 46,649.7 crore, while the newly added projects had an estimated cost of Rs 1.3 lakh crore. The average time for project completion in April decreased to 35.4 months from 36.04 months in March. However, 48 percent of the projects experienced delays of over two years.

The government's focus on infrastructure development, highlighted by international agencies as a key driver of growth, is expected to continue in the coming year. However, despite government's continuous efforts to streamline project execution, the data reveals significant challenges in achieving timely and cost-effective infrastructure development.

### **Railways faces over 126% cost overruns**

Among major sectors, the railways faced the highest cost overruns at 126.5 percent in April, with over half of its projects experiencing cost overruns. The road transport and highways sector, which accounts for nearly 60 percent of the projects, had a cost overrun ratio of 23.7 percent. Additionally, one-third of railway projects and over 10 percent of road projects faced time overruns.

Reasons for these time overruns, as reported by various project implementing agencies, include land acquisition, environmental clearance, financial issues, contractual and internal issues, manpower shortages, and litigation.

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### **Needed, a new funding strategy to break Bharatmala impasse**

The Financial Express,  
June 11, 2024

The sector is waiting for what would be the next grand plan that will take the roads sector keep the construction pace.

*Nitingadkari, NHAI, National Highways Authority of India, highways, gadkari, modi 3.0*

The first phase of BharatmalaPariyojana was launched in 2017 to build 34,800 km of highways at the cost of Rs 5.35 trillion by 2022.

NitinGadkari is back as the minister of road transport and highways and the key task facing him after a superlative performance in the last decade is to attract large-scale private investments into the sector. Long years of government funding of the sector has made the National Highways Authority of India heavily indebted, forcing the government to step up budgeteary funding of highway projects, and put a freeze on new borrowings by NHAI.

The sector is waiting for what would be the next grand plan that will take the roads sector keep the construction pace.

Late last year the flagship highway development programmeBharatmala was put in limbo by the Ministry of Finance directive barring any taking on any new financial commitments. This brought the awarding of new projects under the plan to a halt.



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The first phase of BharatmalaPariyojana was launched in 2017 to build 34,800 km of highways at the cost of Rs 5.35 trillion by 2022. Already the projected cost has risen to Rs 10.95 trillion and only 15045 km of highways of 42% of the target have been constructed.

Award figures for the project stands at 27,384 km which is 78% of the total. Already the sanctioned cost of projects that have been awarded are touching Rs 8.5 trillion. Actual spending under the project has been Rs. 4.10 trillion till October-end.

In FY 24 the length of new highways awarded touched 8551 km against the target of 10,000 km. This is expected to slow down in addition of new highway stretches on the road network.

Officials indicate that Bharatmala may be abandoned and work will begin on the 2047 vision plan of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. The unfinished part of Bharatmala will be made part of the vision. Vision 2047 plan aims to build 50,000 km of high speed corridors. Currently the total length of high speed corridors in the country stands at around 4,000 km.

The government has been bearing the entire burden of building highways for the past 10 years. Another challenge for the new minister will be to bring back private risk capital to the highway sector. Policy steps taken in the previous tenure of the minister has removed many roadblocks experienced by developers in Build Operate Transfer (BoT) now they will need guidance on the ground. A pipeline of Rs 2.1 trillion worth of road projects that will be bid out through BoT has been identified.

As the ministry cannot go on relying on the budget, the monetisation programme which began in 2018-19 has reached a stage of maturity. So far Rs 1.08 trillion has been raised by transfer of operational roads to investors and created an asset class for long-term global capital in the infrastructure sector.

Work has already started on a satellite-based tolling system on highways for which global bids have been invited. This will lead to removal of toll barriers and distance-based tolling – a key demand of users. The minister will also have to guide new safety norms and make auto companies adhere to it. Another issue before the minister would be guiding the transition to alternate fuels. For public welfare the proposal of cashless treatment in case of road accidents is also in the works.

Highway sector has been one of the success story of the National Democratic Alliance government and the new term may see higher ambition and achievement based on what has been achieved till date.

### Mumbai Coastal Road: Northbound Carriageway Now Open, Full Completion By October

Swarajya,  
June 11, 2024

The northbound carriageway of the DharmveerSwarajyaRakshakChhatrapatiSambhajiMaharaj Coastal Road – from Marine Drive to Haji Ali – was inaugurated today (Monday).

Chief Minister EknathShinde, accompanied by his deputies DevendraFadnavis and Ajit Pawar, drove through the newly opened road to mark the official inauguration. Following this, vehicular movement will commence from Tuesday.



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The southbound carriageway of the 10.58 km coastal road, extending from the Princess Street flyover at Marine Drive to the Worli-end of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL), was opened to traffic on 11 March. Currently, this southbound lane accommodates vehicles traveling between Worli and Marine Drive.

With Monday's inauguration, the 6.25 km northbound stretch from Marine Drive to Haji Ali will be open to traffic, and motorists will be able to use the interchanges at Amarsons Garden and Haji Ali.

However, the remainder of the northbound stretch — from Haji Ali to Bindumadhav Thackeray Chowk at Worli — is expected to open on 10 July.

The final phase, linking the coastal road to the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL), is projected to be completed by October. This connection will be established via a bow-string bridge, for which the girders have already been launched. Currently, asphaltting and road surfacing works are underway.

Officially named the DharamveerSwarajRakshakChhatrapatiShambaji Mumbai Coastal Road, the Rs 13,983-crore high-speed corridor built by the BMC is expected to reduce travel time between Worli and Marine Drive to under 10 minutes, a journey that usually takes around 45 minutes during peak hours.

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### Mumbai Coastal Road: Travel time between Marine Lines and Haji Ali reduced to 8 minutes as CM Shinde inaugurates north-bound section

FE Online,

June 11, 2024

The Mumbai civic body initially announced that the road stretch would be open to vehicles starting Tuesday.

The north-bound section of the Mumbai Coastal Road, extending from Marine Drive to Haji Ali, was inaugurated on Monday, June 10. This milestone marks a significant phase in the city's infrastructure development, as it will significantly reduce travel time for motorists.

The inauguration was carried out by Chief Minister EknathShinde, along with Deputy Chief Ministers DevendraFadnavis and Ajit Pawar. All of them rode a vintage Rolls Royce to mark the occasion.

A civic spokesperson said that vehicular movement on the north-bound section was allowed from 4 pm. The Mumbai civic body initially announced that the road stretch would be open to vehicles starting Tuesday.

### Operational hours

The northern arm will be operational from 7 am to 11 pm on weekdays. The southern arm also follows the same operational hours. It was inaugurated in March 2024. Currently, the south-bound section serves vehicles traveling between Worli and Marine Drive. The north-bound section will be operational only between Marine Drive and the vehicular interchange at Haji Ali. According to civic officials, the north-bound section spans approximately 6.25 km, while the south-bound section extends over an eight-kilometre stretch.



The Mumbai Coastal Road is a high-speed corridor connecting the BandraWorli Sea Link with Marine Drive through a series of tunnels, vehicular interchanges, and bridges. The total cost of the project will come to about Rs 13,000 crore.

Shinde stated that the opening of the 6.25-km-long northbound corridor will make the travel experience “pleasant” for people.

He added, “Earlier, the travel time between Marine Lines and Haji Ali was 40 to 50 minutes, but now it will take only eight minutes, a big relief for Mumbaikars.”

Shinde highlighted that the coastal road’s tunnel was constructed using advanced machinery and announced that the entire Coastal Road will be opened for traffic in October.

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### Kerala: Cochin Poised To Emerge As Lighthouse Port For Green Hydrogen

Swarajya,  
June 11, 2024

The Cochin Port Authority in Kerala is set to invite Expressions of Interest (EoIs) to execute a green hydrogen pilot project, with production expected to start within a year.

Chairman B Kasiviswanathan highlighted Cochin Port's advantage in handling liquid cargo and chemicals, positioning it well for developing green hydrogen bunkering facilities. He announced this at a workshop on green hydrogen organised by the Indian Ports Association.

Officials revealed that Cochin Port is exploring various proposals for the green hydrogen pilot, inviting stakeholders to contribute ideas. The initiative aligns with the ‘HaritSagar’ Green Port Guidelines, aiming for zero carbon emissions and establishing green ammonia bunkers by 2035. Cochin’s strategic location and connectivity make it a prime candidate for these initiatives, potentially emerging as a "lighthouse port" for green hydrogen, reports Bussinesline.

Susanta Kumar Purohit, Chairman of VO Chidambaranar Port Authority, discussed similar progress in Tuticorin, planning to commission a 60 KW electrolyser soon. KR Jyothilal, Additional Chief Secretary of Kerala's Department of Energy, emphasised Kerala's strategic position and action plan for hydrogen development.

VikasNarwal, Deputy Chairman of CoPA and Managing Director of the Indian Ports Association, assured that the project would prioritise rapid development and execution, focusing on shipping vessels, fertiliser units, and refineries as primary off-takers. The workshop included over 50 industry partners, marking the start of the green hydrogen pilot planning.

### Green Hydrogen

Green hydrogen is generated through the electrolysis of water using electricity derived from renewable sources. The carbon footprint of this process hinges on the carbon neutrality of the electricity source. In simpler terms, the more renewable energy in the electricity mix, the greener the produced hydrogen becomes.



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Central to the green hydrogen production process is the electrolyser technology. Alkaline and polymer electrolyte membrane electrolysers are two commercially available technologies for green hydrogen production today. Advanced electrolyser technologies like solid oxide and anion exchange membranes nearing commercial deployment as well.

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### Kolkata Metro To Install Battery Power For Moving Stranded Trains, A First Of Its Kind In Any Indian Metro System

Swarajya,

June 11, 2024

For the first time in the country, the Kolkata Metro is installing a battery system that will allow a train filled with passengers to swiftly reach the nearest station during power outages.

This Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) is set to debut on the Dakshineswar-New Garia corridor (Blue Line) and is slated for completion by year-end.

The new system, an amalgamation of inverters and Advance Chemistry Cell (ACC) batteries, will be installed at Noapara, Shyambazar, Central and Jatin Das Park substations.

ACCs are the new generation advanced energy storage technologies that can store electric energy either as chemical energy or electrochemical and convert it back to electric energy as and when required.

“It would be the first such initiative in the country to further ensure commuters’ safety and improve energy consumption,” a Metro spokesperson said the Businessline.

Earlier in August 2023, Kolkata Metro had floated a tender to commission 4MW four-quadrant inverters using Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) battery or Lithium Titanium Oxide (LTO) batteries as energy storage element.

Following competitive bidding, the Indian subsidiary of a Taiwanese multinational corporation secured the contract last month.

The new system has been designed in such a way that the electricity generated with it can be used to haul stranded trains at 15- 20 km h speed from mid-tunnel to the next station in case of any power failure or even national grid failure.

This is indeed a huge advancement as passenger-packed trains won’t have to wait in underground tunnels or o-n viaduct for restoration of power supply in case of a disruption of power.

Additionally, the BESS system will provide 4 MW of power to the metro system, reducing its peak-hour electricity purchase requirements by a significant margin, leading to substantial cost savings for Kolkata Metro.

According to Kolkata Metro, LFP or LTO batteries to be used can be charged at night and used during commercial hours. Specified LFP/LTO batteries will be made as per the national programme o-n Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage.



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These batteries offer improved energy efficiency, prolonged lifespan, and a smaller carbon footprint, all while minimising the health and fire risks typically associated with acidic or alkaline batteries.

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